

MAR 04 2008

Application No: 10/510,177
Attorney's Docket No: BAE 3055**CLAIM AMENDMENTS**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

1. (currently amended) An element formed from sheet metal, comprising a vehicular suspension arm including:

an upper sheet metal stamped component with a first outer face and a first inner face, and comprising a first central web portion with two opposite sides and first upstanding flange portions at said opposite sides of said first web portion;

a lower sheet metal stamped component with a second outer face and a second inner face, and comprising a second central web portion with two opposite sides and second upstanding flange portions at said opposite sides of said second web portion;

said first and second inner faces adapted to contact each other along a substantial portion of said first and second web portions;

said upper and lower stamped components adapted to be rigidly attached to each other to create a structural I-beam section, wherein the thickness of each upstanding flange portion is at least equal to the combined thickness of the first and second web portions,

wherein the upper stamped component and lower stamped component are configured when placed into contact along said first and second inner faces to create a gap along a peripheral joining edge suitable for facilitating a welded joint which combines both butt and fillet configurations to join four material surfaces of the upper and lower components, and said upper and lower components are rigidly attached to each other by means of said welded joint.

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2. (previously presented) The element formed from sheet metal of Claim 1, wherein the upper and lower stamped components are press-formed from sheet metal of uniform thickness, and each upstanding flange portion comprises a fully returned segment of said sheet metal, whereby the thickness of each upstanding flange portion is at least double the thickness of each web portion.
3. (currently amended) The element formed from sheet metal of Claim 2 ~~1~~, wherein the upper stamped component and lower stamped component are press-formed from sheet aluminum, sheet steel or similar sheet metal materials.
4. (currently amended) The element formed from sheet metal of Claim 27 ~~2~~, wherein the upper stamped component and lower stamped component are press-formed from sheet aluminum, sheet steel or similar sheet metal materials.
5. (currently amended) The suspension system of Claim 28 ~~1~~, wherein the upper stamped component and lower stamped component are rigidly attached to each other along said first and second inner faces in a back-to-back configuration using bolting, welding, bonding, riveting or similar fastening means.
6. (cancelled)
7. (cancelled)
8. (Cancelled)

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9. (currently amended) ~~The element formed from sheet metal~~ suspension system of Claim 26 2, wherein the upper stamped component and lower stamped component are configured when placed into contact along said first and second inner faces to create a gap along a peripheral, joining edge suitable for facilitating a ~~high-quality~~ welded joint which combines both butt and fillet configurations to join four material surfaces of the upper and lower components, and said upper and lower components are rigidly attached to each other by means of said welded joint.
10. (cancelled)
11. (currently amended) An element formed from sheet metal, comprising a vehicular suspension arm including:
- an upper sheet metal stamped component with a first outer face and a first inner face, and comprising a first central web portion with two opposite sides and first upstanding flange portions at said opposite sides of said first web portion;
- a lower sheet metal stamped component with a second outer face and a second inner face, and comprising a second central web portion with two opposite sides and second upstanding flange portions at said opposite sides of said second web portion;
- said first and second inner faces adapted to contact each other along a substantial portion of said first and second web portions;

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said upper and lower stamped components adapted to be rigidly attached to each other to create a structural I-beam section, wherein the thickness of each upstanding flange portion is at least equal to the combined thickness of the first and second web portions;

~~The element formed from sheet metal of Claim 1,~~ wherein the upper stamped component and lower stamped component are rigidly attached to each other along said first and second inner faces in a back-to-back configuration using projection welding across the respective first and second web portions.

12. (currently amended) ~~The element formed from sheet metal~~ suspension system of Claim 2 ~~26~~, wherein the upper stamped component and lower stamped component are rigidly attached to each other along said first and second inner faces in a back-to-back configuration using projection welding across the respective first and second web portions.
13. (cancelled)
14. (previously presented) The element formed from sheet metal of Claim 1, wherein the upper stamped component is configured with a first extruded opening at a predetermined point in the first web portion, and the lower stamped component is similarly configured with a second extruded opening in the second web portion, so that the first and second extruded openings align when the upper and lower stamped components are rigidly attached to each other to create a suitable structure to accept a ball joint of a spindle assembly.
15. (previously presented) The element formed from sheet metal of Claim 2, wherein the upper stamped component is configured with a first extruded opening at a predetermined point in the first web portion, and the lower stamped component is similarly configured

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with a second extruded opening in the second web portion, so that the first and second extruded openings align when the upper and lower stamped components are rigidly attached to each other to create a suitable structure to accept a ball joint of a spindle assembly.

16. (previously presented) The element formed from sheet metal of Claim 3, wherein the upper stamped component is configured with a first extruded opening at a predetermined point in the first web portion, and the lower stamped component is similarly configured with a second extruded opening in the second web portion, so that the first and second extruded openings align when the upper and lower stamped components are rigidly attached to each other to create a suitable structure to accept a ball joint of a spindle assembly.
17. (previously presented) The element formed from sheet metal of Claim 4, wherein the upper stamped component is configured with a first extruded opening at a predetermined point in the first web portion, and the lower stamped component is similarly configured with a second extruded opening in the second web portion, so that the first and second extruded openings align when the upper and lower stamped components are rigidly attached to each other to create a suitable structure to accept a ball joint of a spindle assembly.
18. (currently amended) The element formed from sheet metal of Claim 11 5, wherein the upper stamped component is configured with a first extruded opening at a predetermined point in the first web portion, and the lower stamped component is similarly configured with a second extruded opening in the second web portion, so that the first and second extruded openings align when the upper and lower stamped components are rigidly attached to each other to create a suitable structure to accept a ball joint of a spindle assembly.

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19. (currently amended) The suspension system ~~element formed from sheet metal~~ of Claim 26 ~~5~~, wherein the upper stamped component is configured with a first extruded opening at a predetermined point in the first web portion, and the lower stamped component is similarly configured with a second extruded opening in the second web portion, so that the first and second extruded openings align when the upper and lower stamped components are rigidly attached to each other to create a suitable structure to accept a ball joint of a spindle assembly.
20. (previously presented) The element formed from sheet metal of Claim 2, wherein at least one discontinuity is introduced in the fully returned flanges to create a suitable structure to accept vehicle body attachment details.
21. (previously presented) The element formed from sheet metal of Claim 3, wherein at least one discontinuity is introduced in the fully returned flanges to create a suitable structure to accept vehicle body attachment details.
22. (previously presented) The element formed from sheet metal of Claim 4, wherein at least one discontinuity is introduced in the fully returned flanges to create a suitable structure to accept vehicle body attachment details.
23. (currently amended) The suspension system ~~element formed from sheet metal~~ of Claim 5, wherein at least one discontinuity is introduced in the fully returned flanges to create a suitable structure to accept vehicle body attachment details.
24. (currently amended) The element formed from sheet metal of Claim 27 ~~4~~, wherein at least one discontinuity is introduced in the fully returned flanges to create a suitable structure to accept vehicle body attachment details.

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25. (cancelled)

26. (New) A suspension system, comprising at least one vehicular suspension arm including:

an upper sheet metal stamped component with a first outer face and a first inner face, and comprising a first central web portion with two opposite sides and first upstanding flange portions at said opposite sides of said first web portion;

a lower sheet metal stamped component with a second outer face and a second inner face, and comprising a second central web portion with two opposite sides and second upstanding flange portions at said opposite sides of said second web portion;

said first and second inner faces adapted to contact each other along a substantial portion of said first and second web portions;

wherein said upper and lower stamped components are rigidly attached to each other to create a structural I-beam section, wherein the thickness of each upstanding flange portion is at least equal to the combined thickness of the first and second web portions.

27. (New) The element formed from sheet metal of Claim 11,

wherein the upper and lower stamped components are press-formed from sheet metal of uniform thickness, and each upstanding flange portion comprises a fully returned segment of said sheet metal, whereby the thickness of each upstanding flange portion is at least double the thickness of each web portion.

28. (New) The suspension system of Claim 26,

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wherein the upper and lower stamped components are press-formed from sheet metal of uniform thickness, and each upstanding flange portion comprises a fully returned segment of said sheet metal, whereby the thickness of each upstanding flange portion is at least double the thickness of each web portion.